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ABSTRACT

Four significant reforms comprising the national debate on educational reform are defining national standards and goals; creating a national curriculum; using a nationwide standardized test; and adding more time to school schedules. This publication summarizes opinion data from the general public and public school principals and teachers on these suggested reforms. Findings from the 1991 Gallup Opinion Poll and the 1991 ERS Opinion Polls of public school principals and teachers reveal a contrasting pattern. Where there is public agreement, educator groups are both divided; where educators indicate strong majorities, the public is divided. This pattern holds for all issues except a national curriculum, where the public and educator majority are opposed. The majority of the public favor national standards, a national curriculum, and national testing, but the public is divided regarding a longer school year or day. Teachers and principals are divided about adoption of national standards and required use of standardized national tests, but both groups oppose a national curriculum. According to educators, national standards should be determined by professional educators only. Both teachers and principals do not feel that the length of school year or day is a problem harming student achievement. Data suggest that professional educators and the public sharply disagree over needed educational reforms. (Contains 10 references.) (MLH)

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